

Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Services *Updates & Refresher*

March/April 2016

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Refresher: Steps in the VR Employment Services Process

1. Individualized Discovery - One or more Discovery activities is completed to identify the employment goal and the nature and scope of services needed to achieve the goal.
2. Job Development and Placement - Job development begins after the employment goal and nature and scope of services are identified, any applicable preparation or training is completed, and the individual is ready to begin job development.
3. Individualized support to achieve stabilization - Individualized support is provided to assist the individual in achieving stabilization on the job, including supported employment services.
4. Retention - A successful employment outcome is achieved when an individual retains employment for a minimum of 90 days after stabilization



Refresher: Discovery

- Discovery activities provide an opportunity to explore each individual's skills, interests, personality traits, ideal conditions of employment, and vocational themes.
- Discovery activities are key in identifying: appropriate employment goals, the nature and scope of services needed to reach the goal, and preparation for achievement of the goal.
- The Discovery process may include one or more of the following services:
 - VR Counseling and Guidance
 - Job Shadowing
 - Work Experience
 - Observations in other settings
 - Vocational Testing
 - Situational Assessments
 - Other activities to assess unique strengths, interests, preferences, etc.



Refresher: Discovery

- Information learned through Discovery is documented on the Discovery Profile (DP). DP captures all information gained regarding consumers' skills, interests, personality traits, ideal conditions of employment, vocational themes, other applicable info.
- The Discovery process may be very minimal for some consumers, and very intensive for others.
- At minimum, discovery involves the VR consumer and VR Counselor and may also involve providers, family or other personal supports, case manager, or others.
- A provider may receive an authorization to conduct one or more specific discovery activities (i.e. job shadow, work experience, etc.), or may receive an authorization for 'other Discovery' to begin the process, possibly meeting as a team to determine appropriate Discovery activities and next steps.



Refresher:

Supported Employment (SE) Services

- On-going support services and other appropriate services needed to support and maintain an individual with a most significant disability (MSD) in SE for a period of time generally not to exceed 24 months.
- Such services, such as job coaching, are for individuals who have SE and long-term supports identified on the IPE.
- Supports may be provided on-site or off-site, or a combination.
- The purpose of supports is to assist individuals in obtaining stabilization on the job, or their highest level of independence.
- Supports are expected to fade as individuals work toward stabilization.



Refresher: Supported Employment Services

- SE services are provided to individuals with the Most Significant Disability (MSD)

- 3 severity determination levels

Most Significant Disability (MSD)
Significant Disability (SD)
Non-Significant Disability (NSD)

- Individual with MSD experiences limitations in 3 or more functional capacity areas, AND requires multiple VR services over an extended period of time.
- Severity determination is made by VR Counselors and is determined after eligibility and prior to development of IPE.



Refresher:

Supported Employment Services

SE Funding Source	SE Services From Placement to Retention
Milestone 2: Support and Short-Term Retention	Supports provided day 1 on the job - through completion of 4 calendar weeks on the job.
SE hourly funding	Supports funded at the hourly rate typically start <u>after</u> the 4th week on the job - provided through achievement of stabilization. Funding may begin earlier than 4 weeks if needed (document using Employment Support and Retention Plan). Fading of supports should occur during this period.
Milestone 3: Retention	Supports are provided from stabilization - through the 90-day retention period.



Refresher: Other Supports

- Any individual, regardless of severity level, may require other supports to achieve stabilization , i.e. assistive technology, adaptive equipment or other job accommodations, assistance in advocating for needed job modifications, etc.
- Sometimes, those who are not MSD require short-term job coaching. This may be funded through **On-the-Job Supports Short-Term**.
- All supports should be outlined on the Employment Support and Retention Plan and updates should be provided monthly on status and effectiveness of supports, and progress toward stabilization.



What is Stabilization?

- Stabilization is the point in time where the consumer has reached his/her highest level of independence on the job after an appropriate period of supports, and is jointly agreed to by the consumer and the VR counselor.
- Individuals may achieve stabilization very soon after starting a job, or may require many months of support prior to achieving the highest level of independence.
- With SE services, there is an expectation that fading (decreasing the amount of support as a consumer becomes more proficient in completing job duties) of supports occurs prior to stabilization.



How to determine stabilization

- Is it evident that fading of supports has occurred, even if fading has not been entirely linear (i.e., periods of ebb and flow)?
- Has the consumer made significant progress in gaining independence on the job during the period of supports?
- Is there strong potential for the individual to become more independent, resulting in additional fading of supports?
- Is the consumer meeting performance standards of the employer, with as little support as possible and as is likely for that individual?
- Why do you believe the consumer has achieved their highest level of independence? What other evidence do you have?
- For consumer's receiving SE, are you confident the consumer will be able to maintain the job with the appropriate extended services?



Extended Services

- Often, because of the nature and severity of the individual's disability, there is a need for extended services.
- Extended services are provided by an entity other than VR and begin after retention and VR case closure.
- Extended Services may be provided through a BDDS waiver or state line funding, MRO, development of natural supports, Ticket to Work program payments, or other sources.
- It is important to begin building natural supports soon after placement.
- It is critical to ensure a smooth transition to extended services by helping to arrange for extended (long-term) supports, and completing appropriate paperwork including the Transfer to Extended Services form.



Updates: Supported Employment Services

- SE services will no longer be funded using SE levels.
- All SE services are now be funded using SE hourly at \$42/hour, service code 63-01.
- Existing IPEs that include SE level services are not required to be amended at this time, however the service should be changed to SE hourly during the next amendment.
- Existing authorizations for SE level services are not required to be cancelled – they may be carried out until the authorization expires.
- Existing authorizations for SE level services may NOT, however, be extended or modified.
- All New IPEs, IPE amendments, and new authorizations should reflect hourly SE.
- Providers may continue to bill for SE level services already authorized.



Updates: Forms

- Discovery Profile
 - Instructions clarified
 - Re-organized for improved flow
 - Added optional section for signatures for providers if needed for accreditation requirements (Please note, it is NOT a VR requirement to have signatures on this form)
 - Additional space for comments/updates
- Employment Support and Retention Plan
 - Instructions clarified
 - Consolidated tables
 - Added graph
 - Added tab for original plan, and each quarterly update
 - Moved stabilization information to separate tab
 - Invoice optional – may use provider generated invoice



FAQ: What happens if a consumer receives a job offer while in the Discovery process?

- Immediate communication with VR Counselor
- Is there sufficient information regarding consumer's interests, skills, preferences, ideal work conditions, etc.?
- IPE completed? If not, ready to be completed or additional Discovery needed?
- Sufficient information to identify appropriate job goal? Nature and scope of services?
- Appropriate to continue Discovery, using the job opportunity as a means to further assess skills, ideal work condition, support needs, etc.? Consider conducting a work experience at the job site.
- If immediate placement not appropriate, could turn into a placement eventually

FAQ: Could Discovery Services and Job Development occur simultaneously?

- Discovery is for purposes of identifying appropriate employment goal AND nature and scope of services needed.
- Goal may be identified, but may need more Discovery to determine nature and scope of services, such as support needs and effective teach strategies.
- Could be feasible to develop IPE with identified job goal, and continue Discovery to learn about service needs. It would be appropriate to list additional Discovery services on the IPE as well as employment services as applicable.
- Remember that employment services cannot be authorized if there is no IPE and/or if employment services are not listed on IPE.
- VRCs may be creative and flexible in meeting consumer needs, keep consumers engaged, and ensure they are best positioned for achievement and retention of the desired employment outcome.

FAQ: If a consumer needs work experience for purposes other than Discovery, such as to build skills or get ‘a foot in the door’ with an employer, how could VR fund that?

- If appropriate and needed for a consumer, VR may authorize funding for provider to facilitate setting up a work-based learning opportunity.
- The ‘Work Experience’ service as defined in the manual is specifically for Discovery purposes, and therefore the work experience service code should NOT be used for work-based learning opportunities which have a different purpose (i.e. skill building).
- May use hourly job search assistance for setting up the work-based learning opportunity, as work-based learning is typically a strategy used to achieve placement.
- Work-based learning if needed, must be outlined as a required service on the IPE. Work-based learning opportunities should be in line with desired IPE employment goal.
- VRCs may be creative and flexible in meeting consumer needs, keep consumers engaged, and ensure they are best positioned for achievement and retention of the desired employment outcome.

FAQ: Is Job Readiness Training part of Discovery? When can the service be provided?

- Job Readiness Training (JRT) is NOT a Discovery activity.
 - Discovery activities are for purposes of identifying job goal and service needs.
 - JRT is to address a specific identified behavioral barrier as needed for successful job placement and retention.
 - However, JRT could potentially be authorized in conjunction with Discovery activities if appropriate. Ex. job goal is identified, but still working to identify nature and scope of services; or job goal is unknown but identified barrier will need to be addressed regardless of work setting.
- JRT must be outlined as a service on the IPE.
- JRT may occur after a job goal is identified but before job placement; after job placement if applicable (i.e. if behaviors are not being adequately addressed through supports), or may occur simultaneously with job development (M1) if appropriate.
- Creating a resume, interview preparation, completing applications are strategies for job placement that should occur as part of Milestone 1.




FAQ: How do we initiate needed supports for a consumer after placement?

- Milestone 2 funding is for support needs during the first 4 weeks on the job; up to 35 hours of support.
- Additional funding for supported employment (or on-the-job supports short-term) generally begins after the 4th week, but could begin sooner if needed.
- Completed Employment Support and Retention Plan (ESRP) should be submitted by completion of 4 weeks, or earlier if additional funding for supports is needed sooner.
- The purpose of the provided supports is to assist the individual in achieving stabilization (becoming as independent as possible in order to better ensure long-term retention).
- VR may fund supported employment services for up to 24 months, while on-the-job supports short-term are intended to be just that – short-term.

FAQ: Will everyone have an Employment Support and Retention Plan (ESRP)?

- ESRP must be completed for every consumer receiving employment services through the milestone payment structure, and consumers who enter VR with a job and require SE services to sustain the job.
- ESRP should be updated quarterly until stabilization is achieved.
- Progress should be submitted monthly using the appropriate section of the ESRP.
- Complete the stabilization tab when stabilization has been achieved.
- Once an individual achieves stabilization, it is important to keep VRC up to date during the retention period through phone, email, or other brief check-in once per month during 90 day retention period.
- If concerns or issues arise during the 90-day period, it is best practice to document these issues using the ESRP, but if no issues arise, a monthly email, call or progress note to the VRC with a brief status update and confirmation that individual continues to be stable is sufficient.



FAQ: If a consumer becomes stable, but during the 90-day retention period something happens and consumer needs increased support, does the 90 days have to start over again?

- Is consumer no longer stable? If no, then the ‘clock’ is re-set for the 90 day retention period.
- VR funding for additional supports could be provided to ensure the consumer obtains the necessary supports to ‘re-stabilize.’
- ESRP should be updated as appropriate.
- Assess whether the job is still a good match for consumer.
- The goal of employment services through VR, including SE services and other supports, is to assist individuals in getting and **maintaining** employment.



Case Example: Tico

Tico has an intellectual disability, criminal history, and concurrent substance abuse. ES sets up an informational interview for Tico at a local assembly plant. During the tour, the general manager offers Tico a permanent full-time position moving pallets. Tico is very interested in working at the plant.

The ES immediately communicates the job offer to VRC. ES, VRC, and Tico meet to discuss opportunity. Team determines the best course of action is for VR to authorize a Work Experience (Work Experience C), because ideal work conditions have not been solidified and additional Discovery is needed to determine if job is appropriate. Using Tico's first few weeks of employment as a work experience allows ES to continue Discovery with Tico, observing him at the job and assessing support needs.

After some time, the team will reconvene to assess what was discovered through the work experience, and determine whether the job is appropriate.



Case Example: Tori

Tori attends the sheltered workshop on a daily basis, where her problematic behaviors are well managed. ES requests a situational assessment for Tori to complete skill assessment of rolling silverware and setting tables at the sheltered workshop. VRC declines request because it is not purposeful for further observation of Tori in a non- community-based environment. Tori's behaviors and abilities need to be assessed in a community-based vocational environment.

ES and VRC discuss an alternative approach. ES develops a situational assessment at a local restaurant that Tori frequents. Additional hours are authorized for assessment and development of potential training solutions for problematic behavior.



Case Example: Cecelia

Cecelia and her ES have been on the job search for several months, with minimal success. Cecilia has secured one phone interview, but no other opportunities.

The ES, Cecilia, and VRC get together and discuss some additional strategies to assist Cecilia in securing employment in line with her goal. Cecilia is very shy and nervous, experiences significant anxiety, and does not present her best self as a first impression, however once Cecilia becomes comfortable she has demonstrated great capabilities and a strong work ethic. An identified strategy is for Cecilia to do an internship to try to get a ‘foot in the door.’

VR authorizes 20 hours of ‘Job Search Assistance’ for ES to assist in developing an internship for Cecilia at a company that has open positions in line with her employment goal of Account clerk.

Case Example: Jessie

Jessie has just started her job search. Her 'ideal' job is working with a small group of steady coworkers in a clothing store. ES has built a relationship with the manager at Company CM, who would like to meet Jessie. The potential job requires arranging clothing displays using alpha-numeric coding, providing dressing room assistance to customers, and serving as back-up cashier. ES schedules an interview for 2 weeks from today. In preparation for the interview, Jessie would benefit from practicing the skills for the potential job including using a cash register. She has some other challenges that need addressed as well:

- Jessie is extremely anxious about the interview and is afraid she will fail. Her stuttering escalates exponential to her level of anxiety.
- Personal presentation issues (Jessie wears old clothing, has a facial beard, and her best pair of shoes have splits in the sole seams. Additionally, her clothing is often covered with cat hair and her hair appears dirty and unkempt. She seems to be unaware of any issues with her appearance despite frequent conversations).

What are the next steps?



Case Example: Jessie

- Request authorization for Job Readiness training to address basic hygiene issues and ensure Jessie understands appropriate grooming processes and has appropriate toiletries and grooming tools including a lint brush or other tool for cat hair removal.
- Request authorization for Situational Assessment to:
 - Practice using a cash register as well as alpha-numeric clothing arrangement to further build confidence in skills. ES takes opportunity to video to show potential employer Jessie's skills.
- Request VR to purchase an appropriate interviewing outfit and an appropriate pair of shoes, as personal presentation in a clothing store will be very important.
- ES will conduct mock interviewing, including modeling. Record Jessie and review recording with her to help her self-identify areas of improvement. Work through areas of improvement and show Jessie before and after videos to improve confidence and reduce anxiety.
- Coordinate with Jessie's Behavior Specialist on anxiety-reduction strategies.



Case Example: John

John works at the Humane Society. He received 100% on the job support during the first 6 weeks of on the job. John's ES began to fade as he was performing well at work, making independent decisions, using natural supports effectively, and indicating job satisfaction. At week 11, John was maintaining his skills and performance and the joint decision was made to declare stabilization. After the 90-day retention period, John's VR case was closed successfully and he transitioned to extended services.

A month later, the ES receives a frantic call from John's supervisor, indicating John will be terminated. Upon further investigation, the ES learns of an unprecedented increase in kennel registration, resulting in a significant increase in work load. All staff, including John, must take on additional responsibilities and multi task. Multi-tasking is not a current strength for John. You feel John is no longer stable at work and needs additional job supports.

What are the next steps?



Case Example: John

- VR determined it was appropriate to provide services to John under Post-employment status to attempt to help John retain his job.
- VR authorized 40 hours of Supported Employment services for the next 2 months.
- ES completed Employment Support and Retention Plan.

Date of Plan	Tasks or Behaviors That Need Support	Onsite or Offsite	Strategies and Techniques (e.g., Pictures, Audio, Modeling, Task Analysis) to Provide the Training and Support Needed	Who Will Provide Support?
3/17/16	Ask for help	Onsite	Visual support, modeling	ES
3/17/16	Self-management skills	Onsite	Modeling and social stories	ES
3/17/16	Organizing tasks	Onsite	Task analysis, modeling, visual supports	ES
3/17/16	Further development of natural supports	Onsite	Modeling and training for manager and co-workers	ES



Case Example: Eric

- VR refers Eric to a CRP for Discovery. He has an involved family, is actively engaged with his mental health provider and attends self help meetings once a week. Based on his prior experiences, Eric identifies ideal conditions of employment, the type of job he wants (church based child care), and a strong preference for minimal job coaching.
- Eric reports challenges in the past with over-stepping authority, reading social cues, and maintaining appropriate work relationships. Eric has periods of time where he is highly motivated, as well as periods of time when he is disengaged and stays in bed for weeks at a time.
- Eric appears to be very motivated to work at the present time and reports that he is eager to get a job as he has a large amount of debt. Eric has worked successfully in the past, but most of his jobs have lasted 6 months or less. He reports that the first few months on the job are usually difficult.

What are the next steps?



Case Example: Eric

- ES works with VRC to determine strategies for capitalizing on Eric's motivation and keeping him engaged. Eric agrees to participate in an informational interview with a church-based childcare center to learn about the job and ensure alignment with his interests, skills, and preferences. He is hopeful it might turn into a job lead.
- Further investigation is needed to determine why Eric has been unable to sustain a position for longer than 6 months. Discovery hours will be utilized to review previous jobs, learn what Eric like and disliked about each, what was most challenging about each position to see if there is a common thread, and further investigate what is driving his interest in childcare. To expedite the process, Eric agreed to complete a questionnaire independently that he would bring to his next appointment with ES.
- ES would like to learn more about how to best support Eric during the first few months of the job, which he reported are usually difficult. Eric, ES and VRC discuss providing Eric with some short-term support once placed (on-the-job support short-term). Eric seems open to this once he understands that a lot of the support can happen off-site as appropriate.



Activity

- Find a group
- Review Case Examples
- Address questions and next steps
- Share thoughts and suggestions



Emerging Best Practices

- When there are multiple authorizations for various Discovery activities for a consumer, use same end date so separate authorizations are easier to track.
- Authorize at least 10 hours at a time for Discovery to reduce the amount of additional request and supplements.
- When it appears that a consumer will need an intensive Discovery process, start with a team meeting and work as a team to determine purposeful activities.
- Ok to authorize M1 & M2 at same time, or as appropriate M2 & M3 at same time. At minimum, VR should routinely authorize for M2 as soon as M1 is met, and authorize for M3 as soon as stabilization occurs.
- Authorize SE services for a full quarter, or longer if appropriate.
- Authorizations can extend past the current quarter if appropriate.



Emerging Best Practices

- If a consumer obtains a job offer during Discovery and there is not sufficient information to determine appropriateness of job, consider how the job site could be utilized to continue Discovery until sufficient information is gathered to determine if a good job match.
- Identify consumer need first and explain need to VR, then work with VR to determine how that task or activity will be funded.
- When referring a consumer to a provider for Discovery activities, set a tentative date for IPE meeting a couple months out (or sooner/later as appropriate for the consumer). Team agrees that date can be moved if more time is needed for Discovery.
- When in doubt as to whether stabilization has occurred, continue supporting individual. We should never feel rushed to determine stabilization.



Emerging Best Practices

- Be familiar with the menu of services, definitions and expectations, however don't get so overly 'bogged down' in the details that it inhibits creativity, flexibility, and consumer-focus. Most important is ability to identify need of the consumer. What 'service code' to use is secondary.
- Balance a need for rapid engagement in employment with a need to make a good job match. Discovery should be purposeful, not just a step in the process. If not purposeful and/or not in line with consumer priorities, be responsive to consumer needs.
- Providers are reviewing staffing models i.e. generalist v. specialist or a blend, having an administrative assistant assist with tracking authorizations, hours, etc.
- **COMMUNICATION IS KEY!**



Questions